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ARACHNE AND MELISSA.

WHEN Anne was queen and 'Mrs Freeman' was her mistress, two ladies known to fame as Arachne and Melissa came one day before the reading public. Those who are up in the literature of the time will remember their portraits, which expressed two well-defined and persistent types of humanity—those who get good from everything like Melissa, and those who draw only evil like Arachne. Now, each of these ladies has left behind her a long train of descendants—a wide-spreading *gens*, as the old Romans would have said—in the people who prefer to drink vinegar out of a leaden cup or wine out of a golden; who are to their surroundings as frost or as dew; who see the trodden backward path and the unsurmounted hills in front through spectacles tinted in black or in rose-colour; and who sing their Psalm of Life in the minor key, discordantly, or in the major, with full harmonies. These are the descendants of the Arachne (spider-born) and Melissa (honey-maker) who, in Queen Anne's time, sucked poison or gathered honey; and we meet them at all four corners of our way.

The Arachnides are for the most part characterised by a strange and chilling silence, when a few words would remove a painful impression or enlighten a dangerous ignorance. When they do speak, their words fall like vocal icicles which freeze and cut at the same time; and they contrive to make their good advice more painful than other people's rebukes, and to give their information the form of a sarcastic reproach in that you did not know it all before. Their presence in society reminds one of the winter whose 'Breath was a chain which without a sound, The earth and the air and the water bound.' Where they are, freedom flags and gaiety declines; and only the most robust of those moral pachyderms who oppose their thick insensitiveness to all outside influences whatsoever, can withstand the lethal effect of the Arachnides. Their small pale eyes wither; their pinched lips paralyse; their very smiles are the fracture of a crystal more than the visible sign of

a living, friendly heart; and they are the veritable 'freezing mixtures' of life. They take strong and unreasoning dislikes to quite innocent strangers and harmless acquaintances, and will not be convinced that they have no occasion to do so; they quarrel for a mere nothing with those who are so unfortunate as to be their friends and relations, and cannot be induced to make nor to receive an explanation. No one knows what has offended them, but all at once they become like anthropomorphous polar bears to those to whom they had been moderately human a little while before; and more intolerable than ever to those to whom they had been intolerable enough when things were at their best. Then they retreat into their own spiritual den to hammer away at that leaden cup from which they drink the deadly acid that vitiates all their life and destroys all their happiness. They make the worst of things in every direction. If a cloud has come across the sky of others' friendships, they do what they can to increase the trouble and to make that permanent which, by the nature of things and without their evil offices, would have been evanescent. They kill all the tender little sprouts of growing affection between two young people or two likely comrades; and what they cannot do by straightforward means, they do by crooked ones—which comes to the same thing in the end.

If any one is so ill advised as to take one of these Arachnides into his confidence, he is sure to smart for it. Has he complained of a common friend?—the grim confidant rasps the little abrasion till it becomes a gangrened sore, and never lets it alone till it has lost all power of healing. He does the same by the other—the one complained of—till what was a mere nothing in the beginning becomes a cancer which eats into the whole substance of their mutual love, and reduces it to something worse than death. At no time is one of these Arachnides a safe confidant; for so surely as the night follows on the day, so surely will your secret be divulged in one of these moments of pique and ill-temper for which the Spider-born are famous. Women of the Spider-born *gens* are

great in this kind of small treachery. Have you a false tooth?—a well-concealed twist of the poor weak spine?—a tress of hair that never grew on your own head?—a blemish on your shoulder beyond the line of the most *décolleté* dress, and to the world therefore as though it were not?—and has Arachne found out, or been told in an impulse of misdirected confidence, one or all these things? It is only a question of time. In time the whole of society will know the fact; and that perfect bit of porcelain which the Generals and the Colonels, the Bishops and the Archdeacons, admired so much, will ring cracked for ever after. You might just as well have advertised your secret in the *Times*; and so you find out when too late.

Egotist to their finger-tips, the Arachnides make their own small annoyances the one great thought of their lives. They do not make much account of their blessings, only of their misfortunes; and nothing is so large as a microscopic speck on one of their most luscious fruits. The fate of empires and the fall of nations are not so important as the change of a servant or the ill arrangement of a dinner. The loss of a hundred men in a battle does not touch them so much as the loss of a row of cabbages in their garden; and a burnt duster out of a set is a more serious affair in their eyes than a passenger-ship wrecked on the Cornish coast or a merchant-steamers burnt to the water's edge. On one thing only can they be made loquacious—on their own small sufferings. On these they will descant an hour by the clock, and more to come after. But speak to them of the heart-anguish of others, and they are unsympathetic, dumb, indifferent. Their fire burns for themselves alone; to all the world beyond they have only slag and ice to give.

As a physiognomical sign, the Arachnides do not often look you in the face. They glance rather than gaze with straight and level eyes; and they prefer the corners of their eyes to the centres.

How different it is with those others—those Melissides who drink their wine of life in deep draughts from golden cups; those singers of glad melodies; those lovers of their kind and rejoicers in the sunshine; those whose own jocund nature tints the whole outlook with roseate hues, eloquent of the fresh morning and the young day's hope! Wherever they are, things go more easily. They do not suffer troubles to arise, but put their broad backs to the work when strength is required—handle the difficulty with their delicate fingers where tact is needed—and by the marvellous power of their genial tempers, smooth all ruffled feathers and still all angry seas. Seeing life as a mixed web, where rare silks are shot through with the coarse fibres of roughened hemp or common cotton, they prefer not to linger on the hemp nor to fret over the cotton. They think the good is as true as the bad; and where they cannot cure they do not contemplate. When two friends fall apart, they do their level best to bring them together again; and when the skin of the over-sensitive shows signs of abrasion and inflammation, they treat it with an anodyne, not an irritant. They are too frank to be untruthful; but they are too genial to be parsimonious of praise or pinched in the matter of

verbal accuracy. If a little embroidery can hide the poverty of the original stuff, well, they do embroider; and they think it no sin to expound a text already given. Thus they make a grudging admission on the part of A. that B. is not quite such a ruffian after all as Mr A. imagined, do as much good work as a positive statement that B. is a very fine fellow indeed, and A. has no fault to find with him anyhow. By which they knit up that weak bit of the rope, and the two friends, who had strayed so far apart, are hauled up into line as before.

When these workers in gold are, what common parlance calls friends, with the workers in lead, the former have a hard time of it. They are always at the point where the Arachnides are backing and the Melissides are pulling—where the one are trying to break and the other doing their best to hold. The Arachnite takes offence at a word, a look, a gesture, a thing done or not done; and the Melissite will not have it. 'Come, old fellow, what's up now?' he says in that round cheery voice of his which suggests honey and sunshine, or a strong west wind, or anything else you like both sweet and wholesome. Probably the Arachnite pinches his lips and says 'Nothing;' but 'nothing' does not answer the purpose, and an explanation is forced—if indeed that poor chilled soul can be forced into anything frank and human. If he cannot, then the other does his best to laugh away the cloud and to go on as before; but it all depends on the mood of the Spider-born whether this frankness will be an offence or a clearance—whether it will win the day or lose it for ever. Unlike the Arachnite, whose analogue is that liquid which, when it is struck or stirred ever so lightly, breaks at once into crystals, the Melissite is almost impossible to freeze. Even his anger has a touch of generous pity in it, in that a man should be such a fool or so wrong-headed; and where the one will not forgive the smallest mistake, the other will forget the gravest wrong and trust to better things in the future. Tender of heart, he nourishes all good impulses in himself, and recognises them with gladness in others; and essentially peace-loving, as the really strong ever are, he is slow to 'wash his spears,' and only when forced by self-respect, goes out to fight his foes. Generous as a master and genial as an administrator, he puts up with the worries and disappointments inevitable to his business, whatever it may be; not troubling the gods with his complaints because men are made of clay, and every now and then break in the handling and fly in the firing. On the contrary, he makes the best of things even when they are bad; and looks to the perfected work rather than to the abortive, which cannot now be mended. He believes in the doctrine of encouragement rather than in the theory of repression, and thinks when men know that they are trusted to do well, they do better than when they know that they are expected to do ill—with the handcuffs to follow. He has no great faith in gags and bearing-reins, whips and spurs, for any kind of team that he may have to manage. He trusts rather to the cheering voice and the guiding hand; and his choice of method is justified by its results. In all troublous times, the Melissite—he who looks at a man's circumstances from that man's own

standpoint, and not from one external, unintelligent and unsympathetic—escapes the doom accorded to the Arachnides, and lives in peaceful security where these others are not safe, however well protected. If such as he did not form what Matthew Arnold calls the remnant, society would stand still like the clogged wheels of a watch, and men would perish in the moral desert as they perish in the material. The righteous men who save cities are they who do good to their brother-men as well as they who pray to God; and 'he prayeth best who loveth best' is a phrase we all know by heart, and some of us by heart and head as well.

In hours of doubt and danger, the Arachnite despairs; but the Melissite buckles to for the work of decision and deliverance, hoping while a ray of light remains, or a plank whole out of the wreck. The one cannot spell success; the other will not learn to say defeat; the one does not hold on, the other cannot be beaten off. Hence we seldom find the working Arachnides successful in life; and the bread which they have to bake for themselves is apt to be both scant in quantity and sour in quality. The others, on the contrary, for the most part succeed. They have not only a larger volume of life to bear them on, but they have also the art of making friends, such as those poor starved prison-pinchd souls do not know. They are thus backed by their own strength, and given a helping hand by the strength of others; where the Arachnides get no extraneous aid, and soon come to the end of their own power. Then they complain of their ill-luck, or speak of secret enemies who work in the dark against them; and, if women, they go into the sunless labyrinth of 'nerves,' by which they excuse their jealousy and ill-temper, their sourness and crossness. They say severely that no one knows what they suffer, save those who are in like manner afflicted, and that they alone can measure the pain they endure. Perhaps the good-tempered interlocutor thinks to himself: 'A little honey mixed in with all thy vinegar, O Arachnite, would soften much of thy misery and reduce thy misfortunes to zero; and the milk of human kindness set to make cream is a better spiritual drink than the poison thou distillest and the vinegar which makes thee thin; and the poor thin whey, which is but serum with all the cream and cheese and butter taken out, is bad nourishment for men or babes.'

IN ALL SHADES.

CHAPTER XXXI.

DELGADO had fixed 'the great and terrible day' for Wednesday evening. On Monday afternoon, Harry and Nora, accompanied by Mr Dupuy, went for a ride in the cool of dusk among the hills together. Trinidad that day was looking its very best. The tall and feathery bamboos that overhung the serpentine pathways stood out in exquisite clearness of outline, like Japanese designs, against the tender background of pearl-gray sky. The tree ferns rose lush and green among the bracken after yesterday's brief and refreshing thunder-shower. The scarlet hibiscus trees beside the negro huts were in the

full blush of their first flowering season. The poinsettias, not, as in England, mere stiff standard plants from florists' cuttings, but rising proudly into graceful trees of free and rounded growth, with long drooping branches, spread all about their great rosettes of crimson leaflets to the gorgeous dying sunlight. The broad green foliage of the ribbed bananas in the negro gardens put to shame the flimsy tropical make-believes of Kew or Monte Carlo. For the first time, it seemed to Harry Noel he was riding through the true and beautiful tropics of poets and painters; and the reason was not difficult to guess, for Nora—Nora really seemed to be more kindly disposed to him. After all, she was not made of stone, and they had an interest in common which the rest of the house of Dupuy did not share with Nora—the interest in Edward and Marian Hawthorn. You can't have a better introduction to any girl's heart—though I dare say it may be very wicked indeed to acknowledge it—than a common attachment to somebody or something tabooed or opposed by the parental authorities.

Mr Dupuy rode first in the little single-file cavalcade, as became the senior; and Mr Dupuy's cob had somehow a strange habit of keeping fifty yards ahead of the other horses, which gave its owner on this particular occasion no little trouble. Harry and Nora followed behind at a respectful distance; and Harry, who had bought a new horse of his own the day before, and who brought up the rear on his fresh mount, seemed curiously undesirous of putting his latest purchase through its paces, as one might naturally have expected him to do under the circumstances. On the contrary, he hung about behind most unconscionably, delaying Nora by every means in his power; and Mr Dupuy, looking back from his cob every now and again, grew almost weary of calling out a dozen times over: 'Now then, Nora, you can canter up over this little bit of level, and catch me up, can't you, surely?'

'If it weren't for the old gentleman,' Harry thought to himself more than once, 'I really think I should take this opportunity of speaking again to Nora'—he always called her 'Nora' in his own heart—a well-known symptom of the advanced stages of the disease—though she was of course 'Miss Dupuy' alone in conversation. 'Or even if we were on a decent English road, now, where you can ride two abreast, and have a *titte-à-tit* quite as comfortably as in an ordinary drawing-room! But it's clearly impossible to propose to a girl when she's riding a whole horse's length in front of you on a one-horse pathway. You can't shout out to her: "My beloved, I adore you," at the top of your voice, as they do at the opera, especially with her own father—presumably devoted to the rival interest—hanging ahead within moderate earshot.' So Harry was compelled to repress for the present his ardent declaration, and continue talking to Nora Dupuy about Edward and Marian, a subject which, as he acutely perceived, was more likely to bring them into sympathy with one another than any alternative theme he could possibly have hit upon.

Presently, they descended again upon the plain, and Mr Dupuy was just about to rejoin them in

a narrow lane, almost wide enough for three abreast, and bordered by a prickly hedge of cactus and pinguin, when, to Nora's great surprise, Tom Dupuy, on his celebrated chestnut mare Sambo Gal, came cantering up in the opposite direction, as if on purpose to catch and meet them. Tom wasn't often to be found away from his canes at that time of day, and Nora had very little doubt indeed that he had caught a glimpse of Harry and herself from Pimento Valley, on the zigzag mountain path, without noticing her father on in front of them, and had ridden out with the express intention of breaking in upon their supposed *tête-à-tête*.

Mr Dupuy unconsciously prevented him from carrying out this natural design. Meeting his nephew first in the narrow pathway, he was just going to make him turn round and ride alongside with him, when Nora, seized with a sudden fancy, half whispered to Harry Noel: 'I'm not going to ride with Tom Dupuy; I can't endure him; I shall turn and ride back in the opposite direction.'

'We must tell your father,' Harry said, hesitating.

'Of course,' Nora answered decidedly.—'Papa,' she continued, raising her voice, 'we're going to ride back again and round by Delgado's hut, you know—the mountain-cabbage palm-tree way is so much prettier, and I want to show it to Mr Noel. You and Tom Dupuy can turn and follow us.—The cob always goes ahead, you see, Mr Noel, if once he's allowed to get in front of the other horses.'

They turned back once more in this reversed order, Nora and Harry Noel leading the way, and Mr Dupuy, abreast with Tom, following behind somewhat angrily, till they came to a point in the narrow lane where a gap in the hedge led into a patch of jungle on the right-hand side. An old negro had crept out of it just before them, carrying on his head, poised quite evenly, a big fagot of sticks for his outdoor fireplace. The old man kept the middle of the lane, just in front of them, and made not the slightest movement to right or left, as if he had no particular intention of allowing them to pass. Harry had just given his new horse a tap with the whip, and they were trotting along to get well in front of the two followers, so he didn't greatly relish this untoward obstacle thrown so unexpectedly in his way. 'Get out of the road, will you, you there!' he shouted angrily. 'Don't you see a lady's coming? Stand aside this minute, my good fellow, and let her pass, I tell you.'

Delgado turned around, almost as the horse's nose was upon him, and looking the young man defiantly in the face, answered with an obvious sneer: 'Who is you, sah, dat you speak to me like a dat? Dis is de Queen high-road, for naygur an' for buckra. You don't got no right at all to turn me off it.'

Harry recognised his man at once, and the hot temper of the Lincolnshire Noels boiled up within him. He hit out at the fellow with his riding-whip viciously. Delgado didn't attempt to dodge the blow—a negro never does—but merely turned his head haughtily, so that the bundle of sticks pushed hard against the horse's nose, and set it bleeding with the force of the sudden turn.

Delgado knew it would: the sticks, in fact, were prickly acacia. The horse plunged and reared a little, and backed up in fright against the cactus hedge. The sharp cactus spines and the long aloe-like needles of the pinguin leaves in the hedgerow goaded his flank severely as he backed against them. He gave another plunge, and hit up wildly against Nora's mount. Nora kept her seat bravely, but with some difficulty. Harry was furious. Forgetting himself entirely, he knocked the bundle of sticks off the old man's head with a sudden swish of his thick riding-crop, and then proceeded to lay the whip twice or three times about Delgado's ears with angry vehemence. To his great surprise, Delgado stood, erect and motionless, as if he didn't even notice the blows. Appeased by what he took to be the man's submissiveness, Harry dug his heel into his horse's side and hurried forward to rejoin Nora, who had ridden ahead hastily to avoid the turmoil.

'He's an ill-conditioned, rude, bad-blooded fellow, that nigger there,' he said apologetically to his pretty companion. 'I know him before. He's the very same man I told you of the other evening, that wouldn't pick my whip up for me the first day I came to Trinidad. I'm glad he's had a taste of it to-day for his continual impudence.'

'He'll have you up for assault, you may be sure, Mr Noel,' Nora answered earnestly. 'And if Mr Hawthorn tries the case, he'll give it against you, for he'll never allow any white man to strike a negro. That man's name is Delgado; he's an African, you know—an imported African—and a regular savage; and he had a fearful quarrel once with papa and Tom Dupuy about the wages, which papa has never forgiven. But Mr Hawthorn *does* say'—and Nora dropped her voice a little—'that he's really had a great deal of provocation, and that Tom Dupuy behaved abominably, which of course is very probable, for what can you expect from Tom Dupuy, Mr Noel?—But still'—and this she said very loudly—'all the negroes themselves will tell you that Louis Delgado's a regular rattlesnake, and you must put your foot firmly down upon him if you want to crush him.'

'If you put your foot on rattlesnake,' Louis Delgado cried aloud from behind, in angry accents, 'you crush rattlesnake; but rattlesnake sting you, so you die.' And then he muttered to himself in lower tones: 'An' de rattlesnake has got sting in him tail dat will hurt dat mulatto man from Englan', still, dat tink himself proper buckra.'

Tom Dupuy and his uncle had just reached the spot when Louis Delgado said angrily to himself, in negro soliloquy, this offensive sentence. Tom reined in and looked smilingly at his uncle as Delgado said it. 'So you know something, too, about this confounded Englishman, you wretched nigger you!' he said condescendingly. 'You've found out that our friend Noel's a woolly-headed mulatto, have you, Delgado?'

Louis Delgado's eyes sparkled with gratified malevolence as he answered with a cunning smile: 'Aha, Mistah Tom Dupuy, you glad to hear dat, sah! You want to get some information from de poor naygur dis ebenin', do you! No, no, sah; de Dupuys an' me, we is not fren';

we is at variance one wit de odder. I doan't gwine to tell you nuffin' at all, sah, about de buckra from Englan'. But when mule kick too much, I say to him often: "Ha, ha, me fren', you is too proud. You tink you is horse. I s'pose you doan't rightly remember dat your own fader wasn't nuffin' but a common jackass!"

He loved to play with both his intended victims at once, as a cat plays with a captured mouse before she kills it. Keep him in suspense as long as you can—that's the point of the game. Dandle him, and torture him, and hold him off; but never tell him the truth outright, for good or for evil, as long as you can possibly help it.

'Do you really know anything,' Tom Dupuy asked eagerly, 'or are you only guessing, like all the rest of us? Do you mean to tell me you've got any proof that the fellow's a nigger?—Come, come, Delgado, we may have quarrelled, but you needn't be nasty about it. I've got a grudge against this man Noel, and I don't mind paying you liberally for anything you can tell me against him.'

But Delgado shook his head doggedly. 'I doan't want your money, sah,' he answered with a slow drawl; 'I want more dan your money, if I want anything. But I doan't gwine to help you agin me own colour. Buckra for buckra, an' colour for colour! If you want to find out about him, why doan't you write to de buckra gentlemen over in Barbadoes?'

He kept the pair of white men there, dawdling and parleying, for twenty minutes nearly, while Harry and Nora went riding away alone towards the mountain cabbage-palms. It pleased Delgado thus to be able to hold the two together on the tenter-hooks of suspense—to exercise his power before the two buckras. At last, Tom Dupuy condescended to direct entreaty. 'Delgado,' he said with much magnanimity, 'you know I don't often ask a favour of a nigger—it ain't the way with us Dupuys; it don't run in the family—but still, I ask you as a personal favour to tell me whatever you know about this matter: I have reasons of my own which make me ask you as a personal favour.'

Delgado's eyes glistened horribly. 'Buckra,' he answered with a hideous grin, dropping all the usual polite formulas, 'I will tell you for true den; I will tell you all about it. Dat man Noel is son ob brown gal from ole Barbadoes. Her name is Budleigh, an' her famly is brown folks dat lib at place dem call de Wilderness. I hear all about dem from Isaac Pourtales. Pourtales an' dis man Noel, dem is bot' cousin. De man is brown just same like Isaac Pourtales!'

'By George, Uncle Theodore!' Tom Dupuy cried exultantly, 'Delgado's right—right to the letter. Pourtales is a Barbadoes man: his father was one of the Pourtaleses of this island who settled in Barbadoes, and his mother must have been one of these brown Budleighs. Noel told us himself the other day his mother was a Budleigh—a Budleigh of the Wilderness. He's been over in Barbadoes looking after their property.—By Jove, Delgado, I'd rather have a piece of news like that than a hundred pounds!—We shall stick a pin, after all, Uncle Theodore, in that confounded, stuck-up, fal-lal mulatto-man.'

'It's too late to follow them up by the mountain-cabbages,' Mr Theodore Dupuy exclaimed with an anxious sigh—how did he know but that at that very moment this undoubted brown man might be proposing (hang his impudence) to his daughter Nora?—'it's too late to follow them, if we mean to dress for dinner. We must go home straight by the road, and even then we won't overtake them before they're back at Orange Grove, I'm afraid, Tom.'

Delgado stood in the middle of the lane and watched them retreating at an easy canter; then he solemnly replaced the bundle of sticks on the top of his head, spread out his hands and fingers in the most expressively derisive African attitudes, and began to dance with wild glee a sort of imaginary triumphal war-dance over his intended slaughter. 'Ha, ha,' he cried aloud, 'Wednesday ebenin'—Wednesday ebenin'! De great and terrible day ob de Lard comin' for true on Wednesday ebenin'! Slay, slay, slay, an' leave not one libbin' soul behind in de land ob de Amalekites. Dat is de first an' de last good turn I ebber gwine to do for Tom Dupuy, for certain. I doan't want his money, I tell him, but I want de blood ob him. On Wednesday night, I gwine to get it. Ha, ha! We gwine to slay de remnant ob de Amalekites.' He paused a moment, and poised the bundle more evenly on his head; then he went on, walking homewards more quietly, but talking to himself aloud, in a clear, angry, guttural voice, as negroes will do, under the influence of powerful excitement. 'What for I doan't tell dat man Noel himself dat he is mulatto when him hit me!' he asked himself with rhetorical earnestness. 'Becase I doan't want to go an' spoil de fun ob de whole discovery. If I tell him, dat doan't nuffin'—even before de missy. Tom Dupuy is proper buckra: he hate Noel, an' Noel hate him! He gwine to tell it so it sting Noel. He gwine to disgrace dat proud man before de buckras an' before de missy!'

He paused again, and chewed violently for a minute or two at a piece of cane he pulled out of his pocket; then he spat out the dry refuse with a fierce explosion of laughter, and went on again: 'But I doan't gwine to punish Noel like I gwine to punish de Dupuys an' de missy. Noel is fren' ob Mistah Hawthorn, de fren' ob de naygur: dat gwine to be imputed to him for righteousness. In de great and terrible day, de angel gwine to pass ober Noel, same as him pass ober de house ob Israel; but de house ob de Dupuy shall perish utterly, like de house ob Pharaoh, an' like de house ob Saul, king ob Israel, whose seed was destroyed out ob de land, so dat not one ob dem left.'

THE MODERN PRIZE SYSTEM.

It may be accepted as a principle that the education question admits of no final settlement in a state of progressive civilisation. Methods and forms, possibly the outcome of much thought and effort, established in one age, become cumbersome or altogether valueless in the next. They are found unsuited to the requirements of the later period, during which a demand has arisen for other kinds of knowledge, or for more advanced

teaching in subjects previously treated in an elementary manner only. Hence it follows that the minds of enlightened nations become directed to educational matters with a certain degree of periodicity: from time to time the education question becomes a burning one.

The most superficial reader of the daily papers or magazines cannot fail to have been struck latterly by the increasing attention bestowed on such matters by the people of these countries. So decided an influence is exerted by these considerations on the public just now, that we find them furnishing a test in some districts for parliamentary or other representatives. At social and literary gatherings, such questions as the following are warmly discussed: Should the State provide and maintain schools for the people, or should these be largely left to individual enterprise, as at present?—Should State interference take the form it has done in recent educational experiments, wherein two universities and one gigantic scheme of intermediate education have been framed on the lines of mere examining boards, disbursing public prize-money?—What is the relative value of the kinds of instruction ordinarily given in schools?—How may the desire for information be aroused among the masses, and in what way may the stimulus be best applied?

These and other questions of a kindred nature occupy the thoughts of many at this time. It is not our present purpose to deal with the whole question of education, but to consider very briefly one aspect of it—namely, prizes and their distribution.

If we inquire what inducements are offered to pupils to excel in special subjects or to proceed to higher branches of them, we find that the same general plan is followed in all our institutions, from the most elementary to the highest—namely, money prizes or their equivalent in books or medals, the obtaining of which presupposes a competitive examination. In most instances, the prize-money is paid in cash to the successful candidate. The age in which we live is eminently competitive, a fact early recognised by children at school, and still better understood in after-life. In comparing ourselves with our neighbours, may it not be a fact that we are an over-examined people? We may further ask, are examinations always fair tests of ability? Is the reward system, as we have it, the best means of promoting a higher culture?

Those who have had any experience at all of examinations must have been over and over again surprised at the order in which candidates known to them are placed on the Honour list. There is a certain element of chance about examinations rapidly conducted that cannot be eliminated, and which may lead to the disappointment of the most confident hopes. A diligent student, who has perhaps overtaxed himself physically in preparation for, or who is over-anxious about the examination, fails utterly, or is surpassed by some one of very superficial attainments. It seems to us that the verdict of a teacher, or, to prevent favouritism, of several teachers, as to the relative merits of the pupils long under their training and observation, has some advantages over the examination method at present in vogue, success in which is as often attained by an

unhealthy effort of 'cramming,' as by patient and honest study. Doubtless, examinations for some purposes cannot be entirely dispensed with, but must remain as necessary evils. Still, their frequency could be reduced considerably with decided benefit to the physical, and possibly also to the intellectual, condition of the rising generation.

The second part of our question remains to be considered: Is the present reward system the best means of promoting higher culture? Let us suppose a case. There is a class of twenty pupils engaged upon a subject for which a valuable prize is offered. Possibly seventeen of these, from their former experience of their class-fellows, conclude that the prize lies between the remaining three, and that there is no use trying for it. The prize and perhaps the subject also have no longer any interest for them; they cease to study, or at all events do little. The three amongst whom the prize lies are the most diligent, who probably like the subject, or learning generally for its own sake, or who, from vanity or ambition, are anxious to excel. These are they to whom the stimulus is applied; but they are the very pupils that need no further stimulus. The spur is virtually withheld from those requiring it, and applied to those who need it not.

If it be conceded that the need of reform is indicated in such cases, we must avoid rushing to the opposite extreme in trying to effect it. No one will suggest that the method of reward as applied to donkey-races would meet the case. With our present light, we are not prepared to recommend a thorough-going remedy. Much may, however, be done for the cause of true culture by modifying the distribution of prizes. The current notion of a prize is, that it is a reward for something well done, due as soon as the meritorious act is accomplished. Etymologically considered, the word conveys nothing more than that. A higher estimate of the function of a prize might advantageously be substituted for the one implied in the above definition. If it were regarded as not merely a reward for something past and done, but also as a stimulus to further effort in the same direction, more lasting good might be effected, and a modification of the present system of distribution would become a necessity. For example: a large money prize obtained in a junior school, instead of being paid directly to the successful candidate, might be divided into two unequal sums, the smaller to provide a medal or book, &c., as a tangible evidence of distinction; the larger, to be applied as fees at a neighbouring high-school or college where the favourite subjects could be studied for a longer period free of cost to the pupil. The payment of the larger instalment could be made contingent upon the successful candidate desiring to prosecute his studies further. In the event of the pupil electing to abandon study in favour of trade or business, or from mere disinclination, the medal, book, &c., showing the position attained, might alone be presented, and the balance of the prize-money be forfeited.

Among other benefits resulting from this scheme we might instance—that cramming would be diminished to an appreciable extent. A common practice nowadays with many who enter for prize

examinations is to hurriedly prepare a large number of subjects, selected more with reference to their maximum of marks than to the tastes of the pupil, then to obtain the coveted prize, and subsequently to forget the mass of undigested information with which their memories have been surfeited, possibly never to return without disgust to the consideration of them.

We fancy such a modification as sketched above would influence favourably those who select a subject for its own sake and are desirous of knowing it perfectly. If successful in the elementary schools, the means are gained for following it up in a more advanced one till it is finally mastered, the information having been gradually imparted and more perfectly assimilated. On the other hand, the scheme would rather repel those alluded to before, who study hurriedly particular branches solely for the sake of the money to be gained, only so long as this is at once paid to them in the form of cash.

The plan recommended appears to be inconsistent with separate or private educational enterprises, many of which depend for their maintenance and efficiency on large fees. The want of uniformity in constitution and management of elementary schools, and the want of harmonious action resulting from the rivalry between them, scarcely offer the proper conditions for the full development of the plan. In a few large towns, where the relations between schools have rendered its introduction possible, it has been eminently successful. Pupils of marked intellectual power, belonging to the less opulent classes, have been induced by the operation of this system to proceed from primary to intermediate schools, and ultimately to the attainment of the highest distinctions at the English universities; following specially at each advancement the subjects of their choice.

Undoubtedly, a complete State-controlled educational scheme embracing all grades would render possible the general adoption of this method of applying large money prizes. In offering this suggestion as a plea in favour of State education we must bear in mind that the State system depends for its favourable reception on considerations of much greater moment, which cannot in our present limits be discussed.

TREASURE TROVE.

A STORY IN FOUR CHAPTERS.—CHAP. III.

AFTER a sleepless night of suspense and dread, Bertha, who was always up first in the little household, lingered in her room until long after her usual time, not daring to descend, for fear of meeting Jasper Rodley, and only did so at the personal summons of her father, who assured her that their visitor had gone.

Contrary to his usual habit, the captain was silent during breakfast; and the girl's heart, which had been brightened partly by the departure of Jasper Rodley, and partly by the thought that it was Wednesday, interpreted the silence of her father as ominous. After breakfast, she began to prepare as usual for her weekly visit to Saint Quinians' market.

'Bertha,' said her father, who had lighted his pipe and was stumping up and down the room, 'don't hurry to-day. An hour or so cannot make much difference. I want to speak to you.'

Pale and trembling, the girl took her seat at the open window, through which streamed the early sunshine.

'Jasper Rodley was talking to me for a long time last night,' continued the old man. 'I think he is a nice young fellow, and I am sure you have made an impression on him.'

Another person better versed in the art of approaching a delicate subject would have chosen a more circuitous mode of procedure; but the simple, blunt, old sailor knew very little about conversational wile and artifice, and could only go straight to the point.

Bertha did not answer, but sat motionless, with her eyes fixed on the shining rocks and the tumbling sea beyond.

So her father continued: 'And I don't think you could do better, in case he should make any proposal to you about—about marriage, than accept him. In fact, it is my wish that you should do so.'

Bertha remained silent for some moments; then she moved from her seat, placed herself on the stool by her father's side, took his hand in hers, and said: 'Father, my dearest wish is to please you and to do all that you wish. I have but one other friend in the world besides you, and no other relation. You have been the best of fathers to me, and I have tried to be a good daughter to you; but I cannot, oh, I cannot obey you in this!'

'But, my lass,' continued the old man, who was evidently moved by the earnest manner in which the girl spoke, 'Jasper Rodley is a man of a thousand—good-looking, of respectable birth, and doing well. He would make you happy, and another important thing—he would not take you from me.'

'Oh, it is not that, father—no, no!' exclaimed the girl.

'But you must have some reason for not liking him?'

'Yes; I have the best of reasons, father. In the first place, you know very little about him, or you could not speak so highly of him as you do. He is a man of doubtful character, as you may find out by asking any one in Saint Quinians. In the second place, I—I don't love him, and could never get to love him, or even like him. And in the third place'—

'Well, lass, well?'

'In the third place, I am betrothed to another.'

'Betrothed to another!' exclaimed her father in amazement. 'Why, that is impossible! You never see any one; no one ever comes here; and I cannot believe that all this time you have been deceiving me by carrying on a secret acquaintance, when you have so often protested that you live for me, and me only.'

'I have never dared tell you, father,' cried the girl. 'But it is a weight off my mind, now that you know. And, father, remember that I am not a child, and that, fond as I am of you and the old home, I could not go through life without some love of another kind than that I feel for you.'

Bertha had never spoken to her father in this style before, and the old man looked at her with mingled astonishment and reproach. Then he said: 'Bertha, I have particular reasons for wishing you to marry Jasper Rodley: I am in his power.'

The girl recalled what Rodley had said to her on the previous Wednesday, and knew now that there was a mystery in which her father and Rodley were involved, a mystery which instinctively filled her with dread that, during all these years of peace and quiet, something had been enacted between them which had been carefully kept from her, and that the interview of the previous evening was but the climax of a long-gathering storm. Many little changes in her father's manner and habits during the past four years had mystified her; now they were partially accounted for, and yet, to her recollection, she had never seen Jasper Rodley before the present month.

'In his power, father!' she exclaimed. 'How can you be in his power?'

'That I cannot even tell you, my loved one.'

'If you went out into the world, and had business dealings with other men, I could perhaps understand that you, being so simple and good-minded, might be drawn into the power of bad men, father,' cried Bertha. 'But you see none but me; you get no letters; you never go even into Saint Quinians, and yet you are in the power of a stranger!'

The old man shook his head, and continued: 'It is kind of you, Bertha, to say that I am good-minded; but I am a rogue.'

'You a rogue—my own, good, dear father!' exclaimed the girl. 'No, no! Were a hundred Rodleys to swear on their knees that you were a rogue, I would tell them they lied!'

'Yet, it is true, lass,' said the old man sadly; 'and it is to save me from the consequences of being a rogue, that I ask you to accept Jasper Rodley's offer of marriage. You have a week in which to decide.'

'A week! Seven short days!' cried his daughter, springing from her seat. 'But there is time. I must go, father, now; don't keep me, for every minute is of value.'

The old man would have said something; but she hurried from the room, and in a few minutes had started.

Never before had the four miles between home and Saint Quinians seemed so long to Bertha; never before had she trod the familiar road unmindful of the beauties of nature around her, and on this April morning nature was very beautiful; but she had no eyes for the majestic green waves splintering into clouds of spray on the shining rocks, for the white-winged birds riding on the swell, for the sweet-scented herbage, or the blue sky glimmering between the dark branches of the pines. Simply she gazed on the

gray-walled, red-roofed old town ahead of her, at the entrance of which some one would be waiting to greet her with open arms and glad smile. And her heart felt a little sinking as she gained the sandy eminence whence she generally got a first sight of his figure coming to meet her, and saw no one! She was later than usual, certainly; but he would have waited for her, she felt assured. He was not under the archway, nor coming up the street from the market-place; nor, when she arrived at the market-place, could she descry him anywhere.

'Ah, Miss Bertha!' said one of her market-friends. 'And how's the poor young gentleman gettin' on?'

'The poor young gentleman!' repeated Bertha. 'Why, Mrs Hardingson, who do you mean?'

'Why, who should I mean but Mr Symonds! Sure-ly you've heard of his a-bein' picked out of the South Fossy, half-dead and'—

Bertha almost dropped her baskets, and her blood ran cold within her; then, without waiting to hear further details, she hurried away to the office in which Harry was. The head partner received her with the utmost urbanity, and corroborated what the market-woman had said, stating, that when Harry did not appear at the office at the usual hour, a messenger was sent to his lodgings, who returned with the answer that nothing was known about him. Later in the day he was found lying insensible in the Old Town Ditch. The gentleman added, that although Harry had had a narrow escape, he was out of danger.

From the office, Bertha went to her lover's lodgings. The servant told her that Harry was in bed, very weak and excitable, but that the doctor spoke hopefully.

She sent him up a long written message, reproaching him with having kept the facts from her, and bidding him lose no precautions for getting better, as she had urgent need of him, but avoiding all direct allusion to what had taken place at home. A painfully scrawled answer came back to her to the effect that the doctor had assured him that within a week he ought to be able to get out, and sending her all sorts of loving messages.

Brief as all this is to tell, Bertha found that she had spent nearly two hours since her arrival in the town in finding out about Harry, so that, when she turned again into the market-place to begin her purchases, it was the usual hour when she was due at home; and by the time she had finished, the church bells were chiming three o'clock. As she turned out of the arch on to the homeward road, she felt bewildered and upset by the events of the past few hours as she had never felt before, and the central figure in the midst of her mental confusion was that of Jasper Rodley. Instinctively, she associated him with what had happened to Harry. All the circumstances pointed to him as being the author of the harm—the anger in which the two young men had parted, Harry's avowed intention of getting an explanation from Rodley, and the discovery of the former in the Town Ditch a few hours later. To such an extent were her feelings worked up, that she dreaded arriving at home, for fear that Jasper Rodley should be there to meet her and to push his suit; and so,

resolving to linger as long as possible, she turned from the direct road over the sandhills, and struck into a more devious path, which led amongst the rocks on the edge of the sea.

So busy was she communing with herself that she did not observe the tide, which she imagined was receding, to be rising fast, and had proceeded for two miles before she noticed that she was cut off from the sandhills by a broad, deep, rapidly increasing sheet of troubled water. For a moment she hesitated, yet not from fear, for familiarity since early childhood with rocks and tides had saved her more than once from a similar predicament, and had made her an expert in rock-scrambling; but from the fact that her absence of mind had caused her to miss the right path. However, she quickly decided; and in spite of being heavily handicapped by the burden of two baskets, struck straight up a ledge of fantastic rock which, she seemed to remember, communicated even at high tide with the shore. But, to her horror and dismay, when she arrived at the summit, she beheld a fast running, angry current separating her from the sand, upon which, not a quarter of a mile away, stood her father's house. There was nothing to be done but to make for the rocks which towered above her on her right hand, and which she could see were never touched by the waves. Once up there, and she was safe; but the getting there was a problem even for her with her youthful strength and activity. As the rising water was already lapping at her heels and would advance to a level some inches above her head, there was no time for delay. Before starting, she shouted, in order to attract the attention of some one in the house; but the wind was blowing in her teeth, and she knew that she would need all her breath for the climb before her.

It was a quarter of an hour's race with the tide. At each one of Bertha's upward steps, the green water seemed to make a step. More than once she slipped back, and was over her ankles in water; but at length she reached her haven, and sank down on a table of dry rock, utterly exhausted, her hands torn and bleeding, her dress in tatters and drenched with water, safe from a fearful death, but face to face with the prospect of having to pass long dark hours in a wild desolate spot, and at the risk of being discovered by some of the lawless characters who made the rocks their homes, their castles, and their storehouses.

It was some time before she was sufficiently recovered to examine her place of refuge. When she did so, she found that she was on the very edge of one steep cliff, and at the foot of another as high, but not so inaccessible. She was well above the water, for, clinging to the sides of the cliff and springing up between the clefts of the rocks, were thick stunted bushes, and even here and there the tinted head of a hardy flower. But suddenly her attention was drawn from the geography of her surroundings to the mark of a boot on the patch of bright sand behind the rock. A tremor seized her at first, for she imagined that she must have chosen a smugglers' haunt as her place of refuge; but her fear turned into joy when she noticed that there was but the impression of a left foot, and that the spot the right foot would have occu-

ried was marked by a hole such as the ferrule of a thick stick would make, and she knew that the traces were those of her father. The marks came up from below, and stopped abruptly at a thick bush. Something prompted the girl to stir this bush with her foot, and, to her surprise, it came away in a mass, and displayed an orifice in the rock just large enough to admit of one man passing. Her curiosity was now aroused, and overruling all considerations concerning her personal safety, and the advisability of getting home as soon as possible, she entered the opening, and found herself in a tolerably large cavern, the sandy floor of which was covered with marks corresponding to those outside, but which were especially numerous about a large round stone which, from its dissimilarity to the material of the cavern, seemed to have been brought from the beach below. Exerting all her strength, she moved the stone, and staggered back with an expression of amazement. On a wooden shelf placed in a hollow she beheld a dozen canvas bags, which, when she lifted them, clinked with the unmistakable sound of coin. But what startled her even more than the discovery itself was that each bag bore upon it, in half-effaced letters, the words, 'Faraday & Co., Saint Quinians.'

A terrible light now broke upon her. Faraday & Co. were the bankers in whose employ Harry Symonds had been when they were robbed four years previously of three thousand pounds in sovereigns; and she too well understood now what her father meant when he called himself a rogue, and what was the nature of the influence which Jasper Rodley had over him. She stood for some moments irresolute, sick at heart, her brain in a whirl, and every limb trembling. How should she act? Nothing that she could do would remove the fact that during the past four years her father had been making use of coin which belonged to other people, although, by taking the money away, she could screen him from the public shame of having it in his possession. Oh! she thought, if Harry could be with her but for five minutes to decide for her!

Daylight was fast fading away, so that every moment was of value. She decided that she would get home as soon as possible, tell her father of her discovery, persuade him to return the money to the bankers, making up the deficit which he had used, and informing them how and where he had found it. If this could be done without attracting the notice of Jasper Rodley, she might defy him to do his worst, and clear her father of all suspicion. So she replaced the stone, covered up the entrance to the cave with the bush, and followed the marks on the thin sand-path, which, to her joy led, over a ridge of rocks hitherto invisible to her, to the shore. Scarcely had she passed along, when the figure of Jasper Rodley rose from behind a rock close by the cavern entrance, his eyes bright with malignant satisfaction at having watched all her movements unseen.

Bertha found her father in a terrible state of anxiety, and she had to explain how she had been overtaken by the tide on her homeward journey, before she could broach the topic uppermost in her mind; and then, just as she was about to tell the captain of her discovery,

Mr Jasper Rodley walked into the room, and announced his intention of staying the night, so that she would have no opportunity of speaking to her father in private until the next day.

WONDERS OF MEMORY.

IF 'all great people have great memories,' as Sir Arthur Helps declares in his delightful book entitled *Social Pressure*, it by no means follows that all those who are possessed of great memories are 'great people.' Many an instance might be cited to show that men of very moderate intellectual capacity may be endowed with a power of memory which is truly prodigious. In addition to this, there are plenty of well-authenticated examples of the extraordinary power of memory displayed even by idiots. In the Memoirs of Mrs Somerville there is a curious account of a most extraordinary verbal memory. 'There was an idiot in Edinburgh,' she tells us, 'of a respectable family who had a remarkable memory. He never failed to go to the kirk on Sunday; and on returning home, could repeat the sermon, saying: "Here the minister coughed; here he stopped to blow his nose."—During the tour we made in the Highlands,' she adds, 'we met with another idiot who knew the Bible so perfectly, that if you asked him where such a verse was to be found, he could tell without hesitation and repeat the chapter.' These examples are sufficiently remarkable; but what shall be said of the case cited by Archdeacon Fearon in his valuable pamphlet on *Mental Vigour*? 'There was in my father's parish,' says the archdeacon, 'a man who could remember the day when every person had been buried in the parish for thirty-five years, and could repeat with unvarying accuracy the name and age of the deceased, with the mourners at the funeral. But he was a complete fool. Out of the line of burials, he had but one idea, and could not give an intelligible reply to a single question, nor be trusted to feed himself.'

These phenomenal instances may be matched by the Sussex farm-labourer George Watson, as we find recorded in Hone's *Table Book*. Watson could neither read nor write, yet he was wont to perform wondrous feats of mental calculation, and his memory for events seemed to be almost faultless. 'But the most extraordinary circumstance,' says Hone, 'is the power he possesses of recollecting the events of every day from an early period of his life. Upon being asked what day of the week a given day of the month occurred, he immediately names it, and also mentions where he was and what was the state of the weather. A gentleman who had kept a diary put many questions to him, and his answers were invariably correct.'

Of a similar kind is the memory for which Daniel Mc'Cartney has become famous in the United States. The strange story of this man's achievements is told by Mr Henkle in the *Journal of Speculative Philosophy*. Mc'Cartney, in 1869, declared that he could remember the day of the week for any date from January 1827, that is, from the time when he was nine years and four months old—forty-two and a half years. He has often been tested, and, so far as Mr Henkle's account goes, had not failed to tell his questioner

'what day it was,' and to give some information about the weather, and about his own whereabouts and doings on any one of the fifteen thousand or more dates that might be named. When Mr Henkle first met this man of marvellous memory, he was employed in the office of the Honourable T. K. Rukenbrod, editor of the *Salem Republican*, where nothing better could be found for Mc'Cartney to do than 'turn the wheel of the printing-press on two days of each week.' On the first formal examination this man underwent, his answers were tested by reference to the file of a newspaper which gave the day of the week along with the date. In one case his statement was disputed, for the day he named was not the same as that given by the paper; but on further inquiry, it was found that the newspaper was wrong, for the printer had made a mistake. Short-hand notes of the conversation were taken at subsequent interviews. The report of these is very curious reading. Take the following as a sample. 'Question. October 8, 1828? Answer (in two seconds), Wednesday. It was cloudy and drizzled rain. I carried dinner to my father where he was getting out coal.—Question. February 21, 1829? Answer (in two seconds), Saturday. It was cloudy in the morning, and clear in the afternoon; there was a little snow on the ground. An uncle who lived near sold a horse-beast that day for thirty-five dollars.' And so the conversation ran on for hours, ranging over forty years of Mc'Cartney's personal history. Mr Henkle tells us that if he went over some of the dates again, after a few days' interval, the answers, although given in different terms, were essentially the same, 'showing distinctly that he remembered the facts, and not the words previously used.' Mc'Cartney's memory is not confined to dates and events; he is a rare calculator, can give the cube root of such numbers as 59, 319; or 571, 787, &c.; can repeat some two hundred and fifty hymns, and start about two hundred tunes; has a singularly extensive and accurate knowledge of geography, and never forgets the name of a person he has once seen or read of. With all this singular power of memory, however, he is not a man whose general grasp of mind is at all noteworthy.

The same may be said of scores of men whose one rich gift of memory has brought them into prominence. No one has claimed any high intellectual rank for the renowned 'Memory Corner Thompson,' who drew from actual memory, in twenty-two hours, at two sittings, in the presence of two well-known gentlemen, a correct plan of the parish of St James, Westminster, with parts of the parishes of St Marylebone, St Ann, and St Martin; which plan contained every square, street, lane, court, alley, market, church, chapel, and all public buildings, with all stable and other yards, also every public-house in the parish, and the corners of all streets, with all minutiae, as pumps, posts, trees, houses that project and inject, bow-windows, Carlton House, St James's Palace, and the interior of the markets, without scale or reference to any plan, book, or paper whatever; who undertook to do the same for the parishes of St Andrew, Holborn, St Giles-in-the-Fields, St Paul's, Covent Garden, St Mary-le-Strand, St Clement's, and St George's; who could tell the corner of any great leading thoroughfare from

Hyde Park corner or Oxford Street to St Paul's; who could 'take an inventory of a gentleman's house from attic to ground-floor and write it out afterwards. He did this at Lord Nelson's at Merton, and at the Duke of Kent's, in the presence of two noblemen.'

Turning, now, from examples like the foregoing, which have been given to show that a great memory does not argue in all cases any unusual mental power in other directions, let us look at some of the 'great people' whose 'great memories' illustrate the correctness of Sir Arthur Helps's dictum. Running over a long list of examples, which the writer has prepared for his own use in the study of this subject, he has been struck with the fact, that the last three or four centuries appear to much greater advantage in this review than any similar period which preceded them. This, after all, is not surprising, when the circumstances of modern life are carefully considered; but it is not in accordance with common opinion. There is a notion abroad that the power of memory has declined since the invention of writing, and especially since the invention of printing and the universal spread of cheap books and newspapers. Nothing could be more mistaken than such a supposition. If we do not nowadays use the memory as the only registry of facts within our reach, we do use the memory even more than the ancients, for the simple reason that our knowledge travels over an immeasurably wider area, we have more to remember, and, as civilisation and culture advance, a good memory becomes more and more needful for the work of life; the general level of intelligence is being raised, and mental power is developed from age to age. In this general advancement and growth, memory has its share.

The verbal memory displayed by the old Greek rhapsodists and bards, or the Icelandic scalds, was undoubtedly remarkable, and is often held up to the envy of these degenerate days. Yet the modern Shah-nama-Khans, Koran Khans, and other singers and reciters of Persia, who 'will recite for hours together without stammering,' and the Calmuck national bards, whose songs and recitations 'sometimes last a whole day,' cannot surely be a whit behind, if indeed they do not far surpass the prodigies of early ages. We are often reminded of Greek gentlemen who knew their Homer by heart, in the days when Homer occupied the field almost alone and there was little else to learn. But what are their exploits by the side of men like Joseph Justus Scaliger, who 'committed Homer to memory in twenty-one days, and the whole Greek poets in three months?' Casaubon says of Scaliger: 'There was no subject on which any one could desire instruction which he was not capable of giving. He had read nothing which he did not forthwith remember. So extensive and accurate was his acquaintance with languages, that if during his lifetime he had made but this single acquisition, it would have appeared miraculous.'

Since the revival of learning in Europe, there have been scores, yea, hundreds of scholars who have known 'their Homer' by heart and a thousand other things besides. Bishop Saunderson, old Isaac Walton tells us, could repeat all the odes of Horace, all Tully's *Offices*, and the best

part of Juvenal and Persius. Euler the mathematician and Leibnitz the philosopher could recite the *Æneid* from beginning to end. In their day, Porson, Elmsley, Parr, and Wakefield, held the foremost place as scholars, and all, of course, had rare memories; but the palm must be given to Porson, of whom endless stories are told. Before he went to Eton, he was able to repeat almost the whole of Horace, Virgil, Homer, Cicero, and Livy. When, as a practical joke, a school-fellow slipped the wrong book into Porson's hand, just as he was about to read and translate, the boy was not disconcerted, but went on to read from his memory, as if nothing had occurred. In later life, his performances approached the miraculous. It would require all our space to give any fair idea of them; for he not only knew all the great Greek poets and prose writers pretty well by heart, but could recite whole plays of Shakespeare, or complete books from *Paradise Lost*, Pope's *Rape of the Lock*, Barrow's sermons, scenes from Foote, Edgeworth's *Essay on Irish Bulls*, scores of pages from Gibbon or Rapin. He is also said to have been able to repeat the whole of the *Moral Tale of the Dean of Badajoz*, and Smollett's *Roderick Random* from the first page to the last.

Gilbert Wakefield's memory was also of the gigantic order, but it will not bear comparison with Porson's. There were few passages in Homer or Pindar which he could not recite at a moment's notice; Virgil and Horace he knew perfectly; and he could recite entire books from the Old and New Testaments without halting or failing in a single verse. There was also John Wyndham Bruce, whose leisure time was devoted to classical studies. His chief favourite was Æschylus, the whole of whose plays he had learnt by heart, including the twelve hundred lines of the *Agamemnon* collated by Robertellus. He knew his Horace in the same way, and was quite content, until one day he met with an old fellow-student at Bonn, who, when he made a quotation, would mention book, ode, and verse, remarking, that he did not regard any one as knowing Horace properly unless he could do that. Mr Bruce accordingly set to work at Horace again, and was not long before he could name the exact place occupied by a line in any of the famous odes. It would be hard to believe that Athenian lads could beat the English lads of fourteen years and under, of whom Archdeacon Fearon tells us in the pamphlet referred to above. It was the custom in the school to which he went for the boys to repeat at the end of one of the terms all the Latin and Greek poetry they had learnt during the year. The usual quantity for a boy to go in with was from eight to ten thousand lines, and it took about a week to hear them. 'One boy in my year,' he says, 'repeated the enormous quantity of fourteen thousand lines of Homer, Horace, and Virgil. I heard him say it.'

Ease in learning foreign languages is sometimes regarded as a mere matter of memory; while, however, this is not exactly true, it must be allowed, of course, that skillful linguists are endowed with powers of memory beyond the average. Here, also, we find that there are no examples in ancient times that will stand comparison with our great modern linguists. Our

modern facilities for travel and study place us at an immense advantage. Crassus, when prætor in Asia, was so familiar with the dialects of Greek, that he was able to try cases and pronounce judgment in any dialect that might chance to be spoken in his presence. 'Mithridates, king of twenty-two nations, administered their laws in as many languages,' and could harangue each division of his motley array of soldiers in its own language or dialect.

But what are such linguists as these by the side of the best examples of recent times? Keeping within the limits of the last hundred years, we have examples that have never been surpassed or even approached in former times. Sir William Jones knew thirteen languages well, and could read with comparative ease in thirty others. John Leyden, a very inferior man to his great contemporary, had a good acquaintance with fifteen of the leading European and Asiatic languages. Within the last few years we have lost two men who could have travelled from the hills of Connemara or the mountains of Wales to the Ural Mountains, or from Lisbon or Algiers to Ispahan or Delhi, and hardly met with a language in which they could not converse or write with ease. The reader will most likely have anticipated the names of two of the most remarkable linguists this country has produced—George Borrow and Edward Henry Palmer. When Borrow was at St Petersburg, he published a little book called *Targum*, in which he gave translations in prose and poetry from thirty different languages. Besides speaking the native tongue of every European nation, Palmer was so perfect a master of Arabic, Persian, Hindustani, Turkish, and the language of the gipsies, that even natives were sometimes deceived as to his nationality. Mr Leland says that, one day in Paris, Palmer 'entered into conversation with a Zouave or Turco, a native Arab. After a while the man said: "Why do you wear these clothes?"—"Why, how should I dress?" exclaimed Palmer.—"Dress like what you are!" was the indignant reply—"like a Muslim!"'

Viscount Strangford may be placed in the same category with these; and the 'learned blacksmith' Elihu Burritt, whose friends claim for him that he knew all the languages of Europe and most of those of Asia, must not be left out of sight. But even these do not touch the highest limit of linguistic skill and power of memory. The most scientific linguist we have to name, and one of the most remarkable for the extent of his acquisitions, is Von der Gabelentz, who seems to have been equally at home with the Suahilis, the Samoyeds, the Hazaras, the Aimaks, the Dyaks, the Dakotas, and the Kiriris; who could translate from Chinese into Manchu, compile a grammar or correct the speech of the inhabitants of the Fiji Islands, New Hebrides, Loyalty Islands, or New Caledonia. When we come to Cardinal Mezzofanti and Sir John Bowring, we find the 'highest record' as regards the mere number and variety of tongues that men have been known to acquire. No one can speak with absolute certainty as to the number of languages Mezzofanti could converse in with ease. Mrs Somerville says that he professed only fifty-two.

This brief review of the subject necessarily leaves out of account a vast number of the most extraordinary and interesting examples. Artists like Horace Vernet; mathematicians and calculators like Dr Wallis and Leonard Euler, or G. P. Bidder and young Colburn; musicians like Mozart; newspaper reporters like the unequalled 'Memory Woodfall'; literary men like Lord Macaulay and T. H. Buckle; chess-players like Paul Morphy and J. H. Blackburne, have accomplished feats of memory as marvellous as any of those which have been mentioned.

A TRICK AT THE HELM.

DEAR BOB,—Come and lend me a hand, like a good fellow. The regatta here takes place the day after to-morrow, and the *Redbreast* is entered for it. There will be a very fair show of other crack 'Fives' for her to try her speed against, and I am more eager than usual to carry off the first prize. I think I ought to do it, if I can get a first-rate hand like yourself to come and help. You recollect my telling you how that crack-brained Irishman O'Gorman offered to bet me a hundred pounds that he would carry off as many first prizes as I would this season, and how, in a moment of irritation, I took the bet? Well, it has come to this—that we have each won nine prizes, and that Dartmouth Regatta is the last of the season. He can't possibly be here in the *Cruiskeen Lawn*, and consequently, the regatta represents considerably more to me than the twenty pounds which they offer for the winning boat. The *Redbreast* is out and away the best five-tonner here at present; and unless some wonderful crack arrives between this and then, my first prize and my bet ought to be a certainty, bar accidents. But I want you. Your experience of this part of the coast is greater than mine, and will be invaluable to me; and though Phipps is with me, and is a right good fellow in a race, still, he has not your skill and knowledge. Besides these weighty reasons, I want very much to show you my new little craft, and to enjoy a good dusting down together once more. So, just pack your bag, and come for three days at least, if you can't spare more, to your old chum,

JACK HETHERINGTON.

Such was the letter—dated 'YACHT *Redbreast*, DARTMOUTH'—which the Honourable Robert Mervyne took from his pocket more than once to peruse, as the train rolled him along the lovely Great Western coast-line, in answer to his friend's appeal. He was a fine broad-shouldered fellow, had pulled in his College Eight at Oxford, and, since that semi-boyish period, had done a great deal of genuine yachting-work, especially in Corinthian matches in the lower reaches of the Thames, where he had acquired a skill and experience in the handling of small craft under racing canvas which fully justified the confidence which Hetherington reposed in

him. Moreover, the coasts of Devon were well known to him; and to the local knowledge of the pilot and the technical skill of the yacht-sailor, he added that quickness of resource which so often makes the gentleman the superior of the professional. He was delighted at the opportunity afforded him by his friend's letter, and had not hesitated a moment in complying with the request conveyed therein. They were, in fact, far too old chums for either to fail the other at a pinch; and though it was near the end of August, he would still have time to get back for the First. So he smoked his cigar and gazed out at the glancing waters of the sparkling sea, as he whirled by Dawlish and Teignmouth towards the little old-fashioned town of Dartmouth, and allowed his thoughts to roam far ahead in pleasing anticipation of the delights of the coming struggle for the prize.

As the shades of evening drew on, the train ran into the neglected little station at Kingswear, and Mervyne found Hetherington waiting for him on the platform; but, to his surprise, there was a decided lack of cheerfulness on his countenance, which seemed to betoken some unpleasant news in the background. It was not long in coming forward. Hardly had his friend's modest bag been carried into the hotel—for the little *Redbreast* afforded poor accommodation for any but her owner—than the cause of his gloom came out.

'It is awfully good of you to come down, old chap,' he said; 'but I'm afraid it's a wild-goose chase after all, for I'm sorry to say that I can't possibly sail to-morrow. It's a dreadful nuisance,' he added, 'and a disgusting piece of roguery to boot.'

'Why, what's the matter?' asked Mervyne in surprise. 'Have they disqualified the *Redbreast*, or knocked a hole in her, or what has happened?'

'No,' said his friend; 'nothing of that sort. It's a bit of dirty underhand scheming on the part of that fellow O'Gorman, confound him! Knowing that he could not get over from Ireland himself to try conclusions with me, he has got that cad Brewster, the fellow who owns the *Cockyollybird*, and made himself so notorious at Southampton—to come round and sail against me; and I hear from the Wight that he left there three or four days ago with one or two of his own set, vowing that he will show me the way round the course, and knock one hundred pounds out of me into the bargain.'

'Well, but,' said Mervyne, 'we ain't going to be frightened by Brewster's brag. Being abroad all this summer, I have not seen the *Cockyollybird*; but from her record, the *Redbreast* ought to have a very fair chance against her.'

'Yes, yes! It isn't that; though, I fancy, she's a trifle better than we are in running,' replied Hetherington. 'But after that disgraceful affair at Southampton, a lot of small yacht-owners, myself among the number, put their heads together, and signed an agreement never to race against him again. One or two of those men are in the harbour now, and they won't sail if he does, neither of course can I. I'm pretty sure that O'Gorman knew that when he got him to come round; and of course he knows it too.'

'Then why should he boast so loudly about beating you?'

'Oh, that's just to carry it off with a high hand, and appear to be ignorant of the fact.'

'And the *Cockyollybird* is in?'

'Well, no; she isn't; but she's entered for the race, and she is sure to be here, bar accidents.'

'She must look pretty sharp, then,' said Mervyne, 'or she may be too late. Keep your courage up, old chap! Perhaps she won't get in, after all. Lots of things may happen between this and to-morrow morning.—But look here! Suppose she *does* come in, what shall you do? You can't race—of course, I see that, and I'm sorry for it; but I should like a bit of a sail, after coming all this way, and I want to see how the little craft behaves.'

'Oh, by all means,' replied Hetherington eagerly. 'I had thought of that. I can't lie in harbour and see all the craft going out to race; and I don't think I could bear to see the racing going on without being able to join in it. I vote for getting under way early in the morning, and making tracks to the eastwards. I mean to lay her up with Camper and Nicholson, and there is nothing more to keep me out now, confound it!'

'Capital! that will suit me first-rate. What time do you start?'

'Oh, any time in the early morning will do. The tide will be flowing about four A.M. But I daresay you won't like to tiffin out as early as that.—Tell you what—you'd better choose your own time to come on board, and then you can rouse me out, if I'm not already up.'

'All right! But what about Phipps?'

'Oh, he won't come with us. I've told him about Brewster, and, of course, he's very sorry; but the Carmichael girls are here in a big family schooner with an uncle of theirs; and you may be sure Phipps wouldn't let that chance slip. So it will be just you and I, that's all. And now, let's jump into the punt, and go on board for ten minutes, just to show you the little craft.'

So the two friends paddled off to the *Redbreast*, which was lying snugly under the land by the railway with other small craft of similar size and draught; and after the peculiar excellences of her interior fittings had been inspected by the aid of the little swing-lamp—for it was now nearly dark—and dilated upon enthusiastically by her owner, they went once more ashore together to dine at the hotel, and pass the evening over a game of billiards at the neighbouring Yacht Club. But as they landed, their attention was attracted by a smart little craft making the best of her way up the calm waters of the land-locked harbour in tow of a steam-launch. Hetherington looked at her long and earnestly; at last he said: 'Ah, there she is! That's the *Cockyollybird*, and that's Brewster steering, confound him! It's all up now. We'll get out of this to-morrow morning.'

They dined; but their quiet game of billiards at the club was rudely broken in upon by the appearance of the objectionable Brewster himself, with a couple of friends of similar kidney, who had also most unmistakably been dining, and who, in addition to their natural bluster and vulgarity, made themselves more than usually

disagreeable by half-facitious and wholly offensive observations as to the victory which they intended to score on the morrow, and the humiliation which they would inflict on those who imagined that they could sail against them; while 'my friend O'Gorman' was frequently referred to by Brewster himself, evidently for Hetherington's benefit; and whispered personalities were greeted by the precious trio with loud bursts of drunken laughter.

'I'd like to punch the fellow's head,' growled Hetherington to his friend, chafing angrily at the covert insults.

'Better let him alone,' said the other. 'There's no glory to be got out of a row with a drunken sweep like that. He knows he's an arrant cad, and it is that very knowledge which makes him carry on like this. Let's leave them to enjoy themselves in their own way; and we'll go and turn in, as we shall be up early to-morrow.'

So each went his way: Hetherington to his tiny yacht, the other to the hotel close by.

Mervyne was an ardent yachtsman, as has been said; and perhaps it was the anticipations of the morrow which made it impossible for him to take the rest which he had himself advised. Whatever the reason was, after tossing about for some hours in troubled and unrestful sleep, he finally found himself wide awake, and likely to remain so; and at last, jumping out of bed, he threw open his window and keenly inspected the weather. There was every prospect of a glorious day. He looked at his watch—it was about four o'clock. The sun had not yet risen; but the sky was clear and luminous with stars, and, as far as he could tell, there was a light breeze from the westward. He looked over the water. The riding lights of the crowded yachts were twinkling away, as if a town had sprung up in the night on the calm silent waters of the river. The hoarse hoot of a steamer caught his ear, and he could see her green eye winking at him as she made her cautious way in mid-stream to the expectant coal-hulk beyond. He could hear even the tinkle of her engine-room bell and the husky cry of 'Starboard!' from the pilot who was bringing her in; and as he leaned out of the window to follow her track, a man-of-war brig struck 'eight bells' with a clear musical ring, an example which was followed a second or two after by her consorts in the harbour, and by some few large yachts who conformed to naval fashion in this matter. He turned from the window and glanced into the dim room. At the other end was his bed, looking tumbled and unpromising, even in the gloom. He was too wide awake to turn in again. His mind was made up. The tide would be flowing; the wind seemed fair; he would dress and rouse up Hetherington, and they would get under way at once.

His determination was quickly carried out; and he soon found himself outside the hotel in search of a waterman to take him on board. This was by no means an easy task; but by the aid of a railway porter, he managed at last to knock up an individual, who consented, with many sleepy growls at the unusual hour, to convey him on board. Arrived alongside, he stepped lightly on the dainty deck, dismissing his surly friend with a tip so largely in excess of that worthy's expectations, as to make him instantly regret not having named a sum double at least of that which he

had demanded. It was getting lighter now; and he took in at a glance the delicate lines, the admirable workmanship, and the business-like spars of the little craft, and then turned towards the hatch to rouse up his chum. But as he did so, he hesitated for the first time since leaving his bed. Hetherington was probably sleeping soundly. It would be a shame to spoil his sleep simply because he himself had failed to rest. He listened for a moment: he could hear Hetherington snoring away in the little cabin. Then another idea struck him. Why not get under way himself, without bothering Hetherington at all? Capital! it would be first-rate fun! He took a look round. The yacht was made fast to some private moorings, so he would not have to get her anchor up. He could easily make sail himself. Hetherington would be delighted to wake up and find himself at sea—that he was sure of. It was an admirable idea.

No sooner was the notion entertained, than it was put into execution. His rubber-soled shoes enabled him to walk over the deck with an entire absence of noise. He took off the sail-covers, and with his broad shoulders and muscular arms, he found no difficulty in hoisting her mainsail, though perhaps there was a wrinkle or two which he would have preferred to get rid of. Her head-sails were mere child's-play; and presently, he cast off her moorings, lowered them quietly overboard, and hurried aft to the tiller. With a gentle breeze from the north-west, the pretty boat yielded to the pressure of her snow-white canvas, and with an almost imperceptible incline to her mast, moved quietly out from the crowd of others among which she had been lying. Silently she slid through the placid and unruffled waters of the river, splashed with the white light of many a bright star, and with the redder gleams of the many riding-lamps, obeying every touch of her helm so readily as to send a thrill of pleasure through Mervyne's veins as he cleverly worked her into the open and pointed her head seawards. And indeed, with a lovely yacht beneath one's feet, with a fair wind, a calm sea, and a brilliant promise of dawn, the man must be sluggish indeed who does not experience a keen sense of enjoyment.

Once clear of the river and with a good offing, he turned her head eastwards, making a course for Portland Bill. The wind was, as he had imagined, in the north-west, and it being off the land, and by no means strong, the sea was extremely smooth and in places even glassy. The little beauty sped along on her course, making no fuss whatever, peeling the bright water evenly away from the polished surface of her sharp bow, and running it aft with a gentle little hiss, and only the faintest, dimmest suggestion of a shadowy wake astern. Mervyne would have liked to get her topsail up, but this he could not well attempt alone, and he feared to wake Hetherington, for, having got out of the harbour, he was now possessed with a boyish desire to see how far on his course he could reach before his chum awoke: however, the tide was in his favour, and he was making splendid way as it was, so, lighting his pipe, he gave himself up to all the exquisite enjoyment of the situation. The beautiful coast, with its brilliant colouring of vivid green and warm red, familiar to him as an oft studied book,

was itself a constantly changing object of interest and admiration; each trawler, with the early sun gleaming through the shining mists of morning upon her tanned canvas, was transfigured into a fairy barque, with sails of red and burnished gold. Even the long ugly steamers, with their graduated train of smoke fading away into the limitless haze astern of them, betrayed no vestige of their commonplace origin, but seemed to float in mid-air, shadowy and impalpable, throwing ever and anon a gleam of light from off their bows, more like a flash of summer lightning than the foam of churning water; while the buoyant motion of the little craft beneath him, the noiseless speed with which she sliced her way through the dimpling wavelets, the instant and intelligent response which she gave to the faintest movement of the helm, left him absolutely without a shadow to dim his sense of placid contentment.

He began to hope that Hetherington would sleep on for ever. So he smoked on, and noted with satisfaction that with the rising sun the breeze was freshening fast: little waves now lifted up their smiling heads and plashed playfully at the pretty craft as she cut through them; the tall mast inclined more decidedly before the eager wind; and the foot of the mainsail began its welcome chorus of flip-flip, flip-flip-flip as the breeze poured out of it. Berry Head was long past; Torbay was crossed; the Thatcher and the Oarstone were left faint and filmy in the far distance on the port quarter, and now the little vessel was getting a trifle more lively as the water deepened and the wind increased and the shore receded further and further; and still Hetherington slept. Mervyne could still hear him snoring at times. It was rather odd, he thought. Lazy fellow! He need not have been so careful not to wake him. He wondered what time it was. He took out his watch. Eight o'clock! And he was getting hungry too. He had better wake him; so, without leaving the helm, he began thumping over his chum's head on the deck with a stick. 'Hi! Hetherington! Jack! Wake up! Turn out! Get up, you lazy dog! Eight bells, do you hear?'

But not a sound did he evoke in response; only, as he stopped and listened, the same loud snoring broke upon his ear. Very odd! Hetherington was not usually so late or so heavy a sleeper. Next he slid back the hatch and shouted loudly to his chum to rouse up. Still no answer—still the same stertorous breathing.

'Why on earth don't he wake?' said Mervyne to himself, and, trusting the yacht to steer herself for a moment or two, he dived down the little hatchway and entered the tiny cabin. It was empty! He stared around in blank astonishment, nearly amounting to dismay, and as he did so, a snore of almost gigantic volume assailed his ears. It came from the forecabin. This was more surprising than ever, for Hetherington, he knew, had no crew on board. An enthusiastic yachtsman, he, in true Corinthian spirit, worked his little craft himself, with the assistance of one or two good friends and fellow-spirits like Phipps—no paid hands being permitted on board during a Corinthian race—and even when cruising, scrubbed decks and polished brasswork with his own hands, sleeping also on board in harbour, unlike men of more luxurious habits, who

generally preferred the comforts of a hotel to the straitened accommodation of a five-tonner, even when it was their own.

Where, then, was Hetherington? and who was the occupant of the forecabin? He slid aside the little door which separated the cabin from the quarter assigned to the crew, when such an individual existed, and looked in. It was very dark in the little close den, but he could just discern a hammock stretched fore and aft under the deck, and in that hammock a bearded being sleeping a riotous sleep. He went up to the hammock and shook it. 'Here! rouse up, here! Where's your master?' he cried.

The figure grunted, shifted its position slowly and uneasily, and seemed inclined to settle once more into repose, but the shaking being repeated and continued with increasing violence, a weather-stained, lurid, and sodden countenance, set in a wild tangle of hair and beard, appeared over the edge of the hammock, and after staring stupidly with vacant eyes a moment or two into the gloom, inquired thickly and with gin-saturated utterance, 'Wash up?' and then falling heavily back on its pillow, instantly resumed its state of stertorous insensibility. The man was hopelessly and helplessly drunk. But who could he be?

At that moment, a terrible suspicion flashed through Mervyne's mind like an electric shock. He turned, and bolted through the little cabin and up on deck like a shot. The first thing that caught his eye as he faced aft was the brass rudder-head, and on it, in necessarily small letters, unperceived by him before, was the one word, *Cockyollybird*. It was the wrong yacht!

Hetherington and Phipps both agree in asserting that they never had such a race as that in which they won the first prize at Dartmouth; but the former also adds that that fellow O'Gorman gave a lot of trouble before paying up the hundred pounds.

CHINA GRASS-CLOTH.

THE well-known and popular China, or Chinese, grass-cloth, specimens of which, generally in the shape of handkerchiefs, are brought home by most travellers in the East, is now likely to become yet more popular and have a far more extensive market in Europe than was formerly the case. This China grass—*soie végétal*, the French call it—is the fibre, not of a grass, but of a species of nettle, the *Bahmeria nivea* and other specimens of the *urtica*. These nettles are carefully cultivated in China, where they grow in great quantities, as they do in India and Ceylon. In India, hitherto, unfortunately, no marked or diligent attempt at cultivation has been made. These *urticas* are perennial herbaceous plants, having broad oval leaves, with a white down beneath. They are also free from the stinging character of ordinary nettles. In Ceylon and India, where the plants grow wild, these nettles are cut just about the time of seeding, bleached by the assistance of the heavy night-dews and hot mid-day suns, and the fibres

gathered together and spun into ropes or thin twine, from which coarse matting is made. This primitive way of treating the nettles is not followed in China, and indeed the employment of the fibre-silk for commercial purposes seems to be a Chinese secret.

The government of India, seeing what a great benefit might be expected to arise could a practical and inexpensive method of gathering the 'vegetable silk' be found, offered some time back a reward to stimulate inventors in discovering an economical method for preparing the fibre of the China grass. Such discovery has at last been made; three French gentlemen have been successful in perfecting two different inventions which would seem to completely meet the existing difficulty. Messieurs Frémy and Urbain of Paris have invented a method for converting the fibres of the plants into *filasse* ready for spinning. This method, however, would not have been of much use had not a M. Favier constructed a machine for gathering these fibres by decorticating the stems of the nettles by means of steam. Thus, the fibre is not only collected cheaply and easily, but the glutinous matter adhering to it, and which proved such a stumbling-block to our manufacturers, is removed at the same time. It is difficult to exaggerate the importance of these inventions. The *urtica* grows in immense quantities all over India; and now that the plant and its fibres can be utilised economically, doubtless much careful attention will be given to the question of cultivation and the harvesting of these nettles.

Not only is the texture of the cloth manufactured from this fibre very beautiful—it is principally remarkable for its splendid gloss and peculiar transparency—but it is extremely strong and durable. 'Belting' for machinery has already been made with China grass-fibre, and on being tested, it was found that it could bear a strain of eight thousand three hundred and twenty-six pounds to the square inch; whereas leather could only sustain a pressure of four thousand two hundred and thirty-nine pounds to the square inch. A piece of water-hose made of the same fibre was subjected to the high pressure of six hundred pounds to the square inch, and it was proved that it only 'sweated' as much as a good ordinary hose does under a pressure of one hundred pounds. So much for its strength and durability, two great advantages. And, moreover, it is probable, having regard to these proved facts, that, although the texture of grass-cloth is so light and transparent, it would offer a considerable and prolonged resistance to heat and flames.

As to its beauty, most of our readers have had many opportunities already of forming an opinion on this head. So soon as manufacturers and *costumiers* have had a sufficient time for experimenting, we may expect to see grass-cloth very generally used for dress fabrics, hangings, curtains, and in many other ways.

Should these inventions, when put to the test and tried on a large scale, be found to answer as well as the trial experiments, a little time is only wanted, when a most important and valuable industry will arise in India, and, more than probably, give work to many thousands

of hands at home. At all events, if all goes right, India will be the richer in the near future by many millions of pounds sterling. And it is even likely that serious attempts at acclimatisation and careful cultivation of these useful nettles will be made in other of our semi-tropical colonies and possessions.

THE POET'S TREASURES.

THE laughing streams all crystal bright,
How sweet their murmuring song,
As, strewn with blossoms and flecked with light,
They joyously dance along!
They glance through the valleys like silver wings;
They twinkle, they gleam, they shine;
And while my heart in rapture sings,
They whisper they are mine!

Like a maiden's tresses so sleek, so fine,
They ripple, and wave, and curl;
They blush 'neath the sunset like rosy wine,
And sing like a happy girl.
When, weary, I sink on the emerald sod,
They dimple, and seem to say:
'We are balm fresh flung from the hand of God;
Come, bathe in our fairy spray.'

The warbling birds are my minstrels all;
Ah! they know that I love them well,
For I hasten forth, when their voices call,
To forest or leafy dell;
On buoyant pinions they come and go,
Capricious, and wild, and free,
And I sing to the children of toil and woe
The songs they sing to me.

The trees are mine, and the humble flowers
That sigh 'mid the rustling grass,
When steeped in the fragrance of summer showers,
The amorous zephyrs pass.
When the world grows cold, and I turn away
From its fickle and loveless throng,
They nestle around me, and seem to say:
'We love you, poor child of song!'

They kiss the dust from my weary feet;
They tremble, and blush, and sigh;
And the bonny daisy, so fresh, so sweet,
A tear in her golden eye,
Seemeth to me, in her gown of white,
More lovely than all the rest,
With the beauty of summer in her sight,
And its sunshine in her breast.

I own not one inch of the land, not I,
Nor jewels nor silks I wear,
Yet, free to roam 'neath the azure sky,
I am wealthy beyond compare.
To the plodding worldling, let pomp and pride
And the treasures of earth be given,
While I rest content on the fair hillside,
Rich, rich in the gifts of heaven!

FANNY FORRESTER.

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